



GAE Committee Public Hearing March 7, 2016

Testimony of Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill HB 5497: AAC Requiring a Publicly Accessible List of Legislative Appointed Boards, Commissions & Councils

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 5497: An Act Requiring a Publicly Accessible List of Legislatively Appointed Boards, Commissions & Councils.

This proposal is of interest to me because I believe strongly in facilitating citizens' engagement with government entities. To that end, it should be easy for our citizens to find out about these opportunities so that they can match their skills and knowledge to them.

The more we can expand the universe of candidates who might be interested in these types of boards or commissions, the more we will develop a more diverse pool of prospects. I know that has been a concern of some people for quite some time and you may recall that my agency has published reports in the past regarding the gender and racial composition of these boards and commissions.

My other interest in this subject is that my agency publishes the annual State Register and Manual ("the blue book") which includes a listing of all members of boards and commissions. The process that my staff uses to collect this information could be dramatically streamlined if the legislative library's data could be shared with my personnel. And if the Governor's appointee database could be shared also that would have a very positive effect to capture efficiencies also.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 5497.